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A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

OF THE

Rev. JOHN TAYLOR, D.D.
late of NORWICH,

Professor of Divinity and Morality in the Aca-
demy at WARRINGTON, Lancashire :

WITH

Some Account of his Character and Writings.

By E. HARWOOD.

Εἰς ὅσον κλυδωνά δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐληλυθεν ;
'Ωσε, θνητὸν οὐτ', ἐκέλευν τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
'Ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα, μὴδ' οὐδ' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν αὖ
Τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ, μὴδ' ἐν ἀλγεῖνόν παθῶν.

Sophoc. Oedip. Tyr. ad fin.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Reflections suggested themselves to my mind, when I first received an account of the death of the excellent and worthy Dr. TAYLOR, the remembrance of whose great abilities and virtues will be for ever dear to me. They were formed into a Discourse in the few broken intervals I could redeem from my School, and preached to a small Society of Protestant Dissenters, who esteemed and valued Dr. TAYLOR; and being approved by my friends, I was importunately urged to publish them. They are intended to embalm the memory of this great and good man, in whose friendship for several years I was happy. If they produce proper Reflections in the mind of the Reader, and are capable of furnishing out entertainment for a vacant hour, the good design I had in drawing them up will be abundantly answered and rewarded.

Congleton, Cheshire.
March 12, 1761.

ISAIAH lvii. 1.

*The righteous perisheth; and no man
layeth it to heart.*

WE have lately seen many *Estimates* of the manners and principles of the present age, in which the moments of our virtues and vices are pretended to be impartially and precisely adjusted, and the exact proportions of each are said to be ascertained from the most accurate observations. A most enormous heap of vice and corruption has been raked together, both from publick and private sinks of iniquity, and a most delicious Present of it has been laid at the feet of the publick. Dark scenes of lust and luxury have been brought to light, by persons, whose venerable characters, one would have thought, might have excused them from *personally* frequenting
such

such places, whatever plausible reasons might be alledged by them, that such visits were repeated for the very laudable purposes of painting living characters, and forming *Estimates*. All our fashionable amusements, our polite diversions, our reigning pleasures and follies, our corruption and venality ; in short, all the evils of publick, social and domestic life, have been collected and described with a good design, in order to represent to us, at one view, the languishing state of religion and morality in the nation ; and the prevalency of vice amongst us, has been interpreted in the most melancholy and gloomy sense. The question is, whether our vices, notorious and shameful as they must be acknowledged to be, have not been exaggerated beyond all truth, our virtues extenuated, and explained away, and the features of the happiest times, in which a rational being ever breathed, been charged with a deformity which the most depraved and corrupt ages never resembled. Certain it is, that such general and random descriptions of national vice, how laboured and studied soever, are productive of no one moral purpose, they neither convince nor reform individuals ;

viduals ; and as they show not a man's true moral countenance to himself, every one, who reads them, applies the strong moral likeness to another, and never imagines that *he* was one that sat for the picture. Such deformed pieces too, which have been *drawn* by the pencils of the morose and gloomy, both disgust and are lost upon every benevolent person, who thinks he has reason to persuade himself of one pleasing truth, which is, that there is more virtue than vice, more happiness than misery in the world. He that fills a long and large catalogue with the vices of a whole Community, and holds it up as an exact and true representation of the whole collective body, does the same thing as another, who from the various and dreadful diseases and distempers of an Hospital should himself judge, and instruct others to judge, of the health of a nation.

But notwithstanding the many and shameful vices, that have been described in several late *Estimates*, as characteristical of the age we live in ; notwithstanding the industry and pains the authors have taken, to render the list of those vices which prove
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our degeneracy as compleat as possible ; yet there is still one sad and flagrant proof of our ingratitude and vice, which has been omitted and overlooked by these writers, which is, our inattention to the characters of deceased piety, and our want of respect to their memory, and illustrious virtues. The Prophet declares in the Text, that this most base and disrespectful conduct was common and general in his time, and brands the age he lived in with just satyr and reproach, which could suffer the characters of persons of distinguished holiness and worth to sink into oblivion, without the least sorrow and regret. *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.* There cannot certainly be a stronger indication of the general decay and languishing condition of vital religion, than when the shining virtues of the pious and good man are suffered to spend their influence in silence and obscurity ; and when characters of wisdom and every virtue pass unobserved and unrewarded, or what is a more unhappy circumstance, are misrepresented and traduced. Nothing can show the deplorable want of publick virtue in a more striking and glaring light, than

than when righteous men, of *whom this world is not worthy*, perish unlamented and unhonoured, the tribute of a grateful tear denied them, their names and virtues soon lost in the gay scenes of folly and dissipation, and the pains they took to make mankind wiser and better buried in everlasting forgetfulness. And what friend of religion and lover of virtue is there, who makes it his pleasure and duty to honour deceased worth, and to celebrate the dear remembrance of their venerable characters, when he takes a survey of mankind, and seriously considers the vanity and wretchedness of human condition, the empty and unavailing pleasures, and ridiculous amusements and pursuits of mankind; the undistinguishing applause that in common life is promiscuously given to the worthy and unworthy, and above all, the general neglect of illustrious worth and merit, and the disrespect and ingratitude shown to their memory; what friend of virtue and human nature is there, who reflects on this, but must generously commiserate and upbraid mankind, and laying his hand on his heart, with a mixture of pity and indignation, cry out, *The righteous*

teous man perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart! In discoursing from which words I propose,

- I. To account for that base and ungrateful conduct of mankind, which is here mentioned, towards persons of merit and character, and show the reasons on which such treatment is generally founded.
- II. Expose the disingenuous baseness of such a conduct.

I. I propose to account for that base and ungrateful conduct of mankind, here mentioned, towards persons of merit and character, and show the reasons on which such treatment is generally founded. Such unhappy events as these, attendant on the wise and good, happen not without proper causes to produce them. Adequate reasons may be assigned that will solve this mystery of black ingratitude, and point out the impure source from which it is derived. The principal causes of such a conduct seem to be the following.

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1. That

1. That *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*, may be justly ascribed to the common condition and circumstances of human things. This is the most favourable and candid interpretation that can be put upon such a treatment. Human life is one great scene of motion and bustle. The respective offices of our several stations, the hopes of getting, and the fears of losing, most commonly engross all the thoughts and cares of mankind. The pursuits and employments of the generality of the world hardly leave them, as they complain, agreeable intervals enough to enjoy the friendship and society of the living, much less to hold a mournful converse with the dead. The scenes of life are perpetually shifting and changing. Infancy, childhood, manhood, and old age, follow each other in swift succession. And the great affairs of this world are as inconstant and mutable as the stages of human life. Nothing in this imperfect world is fixed and permanent; our joys and sorrows, our cares and fears, our wants and hopes, our health and sickness, our cheerful and our melancholy moments alternately follow each other, and infinitely chequer and
diversify

diversify the whole of our short passage from the cradle to the grave. *Man flieth as a shadow and continueth not. Here we have no continuing city. Our life is as a vapour, which appears for a short time, and then vanisheth away.* In such a short and momentary state of duration, as is here allotted us, and when that precarious and short-lived period too is filled up with such a distracting variety of cares and concerns that are inseparable from it, no wonder that virtue passes through the croud neglected, and the memory of it soon sinks into oblivion. In a state of existence, which is so transient and visionary, and on the vast stage of which all its infinite variety of creatures have but just time to present themselves, act a short part, and then disappear, it cannot but be, that the wise and good must share one common lot, and whatever just applause they may gain by the characters they support with dignity, yet when numbered with the dead, the memory of their fame and actions must perish for ever.

It will cease to surprize and affect us, that a *particular* person of extensive abilities and usefulness should die and be forgot by those

who have eminently shared the benefit of his illustrious virtues, when we reflect that kings and kingdoms are subject to the same common fate. And can we deplore this strange and cruel destiny, and brand mankind with ingratitude, for suffering deceased piety and wisdom to lose their deserved honours, when we take a review of the ages that are past, see populous and opulent cities laid in ashes, and the fame of them for ever perished; read of excellent patriots, the ornaments of their country, and the glory of the age they lived in, whose publick spirited actions are utterly unknown to us; are made acquainted with large and extensive dominions, and yet the names of their proud kings and governours not transmitted to us*; and find recorded in history the foundation of empires, revolutions in governments, acquisitions of provinces, battles fought, victories gained, the rise, progress, declension and ruin of great and absolute monarchies, and the names of all these long since swallowed up and lost in the flood of time, and

* Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illachrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longa
Nocte, —

Horat. Car. Lib. 4. Ode 9.

and now only furnishing employment for the vain conjectures and learned dulness of Critics and Commentators to recover them? Let not the ingenious and learned, pore with sorrow and melancholy over the gloomy prospect, when his name and his knowledge will be forgot. This is no more than what has befallen the *Arts* and *Sciences* themselves, which but a few ages were absolutely lost in monkish ignorance and stupidity, and but lately received a revival amongst us.

The pleasing hope of extending our fame to posterity therefore, which so agreeably soothes and flatters the breasts of the wise and learned, and prompts us so powerfully to the attainment of the most excellent and beneficial kinds of knowledge, is all empty and chimerical delusion. The present state, the fashion of which is so perpetually passing away, will not admit of it. The years will come to the wisest and best of the present race of mortals, when their virtues and excellencies will be recorded no more, their actions no more recounted with honour and applause, and the fame of their knowledge and abilities cease to engage and interest mankind in them. The Patriot, Statesman, General,

neral, Scholar, Philosopher and Divine, of the present and last Century are fresh in our remembrance, but the eminently great and good of three or four Centuries ago, are the same as the eminently great and good before the flood. No traces are left of them, except a few faint traces of their birth and death, that we meet with in forgotten and obscure historians. How should it be otherwise, considering the mutability and vanity of human nature. Our memories are frequently as treacherous and unfaithful as the records we commit to them; the greatest achievements and most excellent discoveries soon cease to impress and affect us, and the mind that was once stored with useful and ornamental knowledge, through inattention, the cares and pleasures of life, and want of assiduous culture, will soon lose the very first principles of it. To expect therefore an immortality of fame on earth, is a vain and visionary hope, has nothing in human life and manners to support it, and is both inconsistent with the nature of the present state, and the common pursuits of mankind.

So

So *that righteous men dying, and no man laying it to heart*, is a probable circumstance that would naturally fall out in the common course of human things, and may be looked upon as nothing unusual and unfrequent. For the views of mankind are fixed strongly and eagerly on the objects of the time that is to come, they review not the scenes that are past, they are too closely attached to the little interests and hopes they have in prospect, to think of the pious and illustrious dead, or pay their memory the just tribute of a sigh. The path of life, that is most commonly trod, is progressive, men press forwards with eager and impatient steps, and love not to look behind them, though it be to take an everlasting farewell of the wise and virtuous. No sooner are the venerable remains of learning and worth committed to *the common house prepared for all the living*, but they return with the same ardour and relish to their fond amusements and pleasures, the mournful and affecting scene is forgot, the fugitive tear is for ever dried up, and they can think on their piety and wisdom without sorrow and without regret. What wonder is it then,

if

if such is the present condition of human life and human conduct, that *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*; that he is attended indeed to the tomb with solemn gait, and all the pageantry and pomp of woe, that the bosoms of his friends, who knew his worth, heave with a transient sigh, and that their eyes drop a tributary tear due to his consummate merit, but that no sooner does the grave close over him, and the *mourners go* their appointed time *about the streets*, but his memory perishes for ever.

2. That *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*, may be ascribed to the prevalence of vice in that age in which he lives, and the general neglect of virtue necessarily consequent upon it. When vice triumphs in an age or nation, and the pursuit of unlawful and unmanly pleasures becomes general and fashionable, virtue cannot long expect her due honours, or hope for deserved respect and protection. The influence of virtue is then almost lost, and it sheds its friendly beams on corruption and depravity, without producing any vital effects. In such times it must expect to be neglected, vilified, and abused, to pass un-
honoured

honoured in obscurity and silence, and its fame and memory to be consigned to eternal forgetfulness.

It would be comparatively happy, if in an age where vice and folly triumphed, inoffensive merit is suffered to dwell in the shade unmolested, in tranquility and peace. But this is seldom the case. Frequently it is drawn from these calm retreats, and made a *spectacle* of abuse and every indignity *before angels and men*. When the love of pleasure seizes a nation, and the generality are lost to all sense of shame and virtue, modest merit is sure to be insulted; all their rage and malice are wreaked upon it, the most ingenious and cruel arts of persecution are invented, and every form of misery and woe inflicted upon it, merely for not running with them to the same excess of riot and outrage, and preserving itself pure and innocent amidst all this contagion of corruption and immorality.

And especially is the vengeance of a wicked age poured upon the devoted head of suffering virtue, when that virtue endeavours to excite men's attention to it, exposes the fatal and shameful vices in which men

are engaged, and with a becoming freedom satyrizes the prevailing principles and morals of the times. No wonder, that when such an one, in such an age, with a noble fortitude, preaches up the excellency of religion, and, by the charms of a fair example, shows the world the superior excellency of it, and lashes their vices with manly rage and spirit, but he is treated as a reformer, and perhaps at last suffers too as a reformer.

If in times, where vice is countenanced by the great and noble, and the practice of it generally regarded as a fashionable and polite accomplishment, the man of virtue and wisdom meets with contempt and abuse, his virtues ridiculed, and his reputation and character degraded and sunk, must not the fame of his virtues, after death, necessarily be lost, when they could not raise him, when living, above contempt, and secure to him the smallest breath of applause? It is absurd to suppose, that a profligate and abandoned people will honour and remember with pleasure the excellencies of those, who, when living, satyrized their darling vices, and would not suffer them to be easy in

in the full enjoyment of them. It is well, if intrinsic merit and worth obtain its proper share of esteem and reverence from the wise and virtuous ; from the depraved and wicked it must expect nothing but insult, obloquy, and a thousand odious and reproachful names. The neglect therefore of eminent virtue, and disrespect to the memory of the most conspicuous characters of public and private greatness, is an unhappy circumstance and event that necessarily happens, when vice prevails and triumphs.

3. That *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*, may be ascribed to a principle of ill-natured envy, solely excited by his superior attainments. *Horace* indeed asserts, “ That death converts that envy, “ which hated living virtue, into applause, “ and makes the malevolent themselves deplore the loss that they and the public “ have sustained of such useful characters *.”

And in another place † declares, “ That
C 2 “ though

* Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quarimus invidi.

Car. Lib. 3. Od. 24.

† Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux,
Post ingentia facta, Deorum in Tempia recepti;

Dum

“ though *Romulus*, and *Bacchus*, *Castor* and
 “ *Pollux*, bestowed upon mankind the most
 “ signal advantages, polished life with many
 “ useful arts, built towns, and gained many
 “ glorious victories, yet, after all these great
 “ and illustrious actions, found reason to la-
 “ ment, that the honours that mankind
 “ were disposed to show them, were far
 “ from being adequate to their merits. That
 “ *Hercules*, who cleared the earth of so
 “ many monsters, and destroyed the dread-
 “ ful *Hydra*, found, to his sorrow, that the
 “ monster envy was not to be destroyed,
 “ but by his death. Superior virtue, (he
 “ says) is sure to irritate and provoke the
 “ rage of others of inferior merit, who will
 “ carp and detract from their worth, when
 “ living, and adore them when dead.” This
 reflection

Dum Terras hominumque colunt genus, aspera bella
 Componunt, agros assignant, oppida condunt ;
 Ploravere suis non respondere favorem
 Speratum meritis. Diram qui contudit Hydram,
 Notaque fatali portenta labore subegit,
 Comperit Invidiam supremo fine domari.
 Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes
 Infra se positas : extinctus amabitur idem.

Epist. Lib. 2. Ver. 5.

reflection is, in general, just, but is far from being *universally* true. Malice often pursues a man of superior wisdom and goodness beyond the grave, and will disturb his ashes with the most barbarous indecency, and rudeness. The grave itself will hardly secure its inhabitant from the poisoned arrows of spite and calumny ; and it is common to hear the memory of persons of the first rank, in true science and literature, treated with scurrility and abuse, their little faults and follies brought to light, and recounted with every circumstance of aggravation, and the most worthy characters, by this means, exposed to the jests and ridicule of mankind.

The righteous and good man perishes indeed, when neither his living excellencies could secure him from the envy, nor his death from the calumny, of an hard-judging world. Instead of making every kind allowance for human imperfection, instead of being benevolently disposed to throw a veil over the frailties and foibles of our fellow-christians, we keep our eyes fixed upon their conduct with an attention, that no error, how small and venial soever, can elude and escape, and then proclaim it to the world with a most diabolical

diabolical triumph. Blessed God, how repugnant is such a temper and disposition as this, to that benevolent spirit the Gospel breathes in every page ! *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye, who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Forgive one another, and pray one for another.* We are painfully conscious how much we are excelled by these illustrious characters, we despair of acquiring their various learning, great abilities, and universal reputation ; our low and groveling dispositions then set us to undermine this fair and well-built fabric by slow and secret strokes ; we begin to question their learning, give sly and cunning hints of our disappointment in finding them not the characters we imagined, explain away their virtues, point out their supposed or real imperfections ; and when we have once brought them to a level with our own very low standard, we freely permit ourselves and a cruel world to use them at mercy.

Thus is virtue too commonly treated in this life, and the most shining instances of it rewarded with this black ingratitude.

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The hopes, that it forms of closing this vain life in tranquility and peace, are thus fatally disappointed, and it finds the miseries of scandal, disgrace, ill-treatment, scurrility and contempt, all collected, and point their baleful rays upon the last infirm stage of life, when it is least able to support them. He who considers this sad and wretched end of the wise and good, and the ingratitude of the world for their useful services, would almost be disposed, in a gloomy hour, to view all mankind in a most odious light; and to condemn human life, as one universal scene of confusion, in which the most eminent characters are either neglected and starve, or, when brought upon the stage, how excellently soever they may support, for a while, the parts assigned them, are sure, at last, to be made a publick spectacle of satyr and derision.

But after death has kindly released this pious sufferer from his misery, and sealed his eyes in sweet and undisturbed repose, does the malice of the world cease with his breath, and is their rage and envy converted into admiration and applause? Do they revere his memory, and wish with regret for his

his useful virtues? Nothing less true. *How then dieth this wise and good man?* Why, even as the fool, for there is no remembrance of the wise man more than of the fool. Eccles. ii. 16.

4. That *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*, is in some measure owing to, and may certainly be concluded from, a spiteful and ill-natured triumph, expressed by the majority, that their sentiments and principles are perished with them. Upon the decease of a person, who has rendered his name famous, by espousing and defending opinions, which are vulgarly branded as heretical and unscriptural, it is common to hear men of more zeal than knowledge exclaim, with a great deal of malicious pleasure, “There is an end *now* of all his false and fantastical Notions and erroneous Doctrines.” Such are disposed to treat his memory with contempt, because he treated their peculiar party Nostrums with contempt. Hence their rage and rancour. He was excited by a spirit of free and generous inquiry to investigate truth, and from a candour and goodness of heart to embrace it wherever he found it; he searched the Scriptures with indefatigable industry, and with constant
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and fervent applications to the great source of wisdom and truth, to enlighten his understanding and dispel his darkness ; he saw, upon a severe study of these sacred treasures, that mankind had been deluded by the cunning and crafty, with regard to many points of great excellency and importance, his love of truth would not suffer him to stifle this conviction, but prompted him freely and impartially to communicate to the world the result of his honest labours and researches ; the result of his honest labours and researches proved contrary to the darling notions and opinions of the multitude, and for his useful endeavours in disabusing the world, for his laborious pains in removing whole loads of *hay and stubble* that had been thrown on Christianity, and *burning* them without ceremony, he must be treated as a bad man, a Blasphemer, an Arian, a Deist, and worse than a Deist. This is the treatment that persons of good learning and abilities, and of generous sentiments, when they imploy their great talents on the Scriptures, are sure to meet with from the world. Any other branch of learning may be studied with impunity, but he, who critically studies the

D Scriptures,

Scriptures, is sure to bring about him, in this age of Enthusiasm, a swarm of noisy and angry hornets, that will pester and sting him as long as he lives. He must possess great courage and magnanimity of soul, who can bravely resolve to meet and encounter all this opposition, prompted by a pure love of truth, and a desire of understanding, and leading others to understand, the divine records.

Before he undertakes this arduous and dangerous province, let him sit down, and count the cost. Let him have before his eyes that dire poverty and disgrace, that may await him, the many odious names that will be given him, the few friends and patrons of his opinions, however just, he is likely to gain ; the contempt of the multitude, which he is sure to incur, and all that train of evils, which arise from calling in question long-established opinions, and from controverting with freedom old absurdities, that have been sanctified by custom and authority. No wonder, that when a person, with these abilities, and this scriptural knowledge, rises with a noble and undaunted spirit to attack the strongholds of superstition and error, if he is persecuted

secuted and abused, while living, and when he *perishes* in the cause of liberty, if few men *lay it to heart*. The passions of mankind are seldom or never engaged on the side of truth. The noise and rant of Enthusiasm can, with a very little exertion of its powerful mechanism, draw in its thousands and millions. Truth is calm and composed, first strives to hush the boisterous passions into peace, then addresses the reason, and convinces the understanding and judgment. But who sees not, that he, who takes this method to procure the attention of the multitude, must be unsuccessful ; especially, if he thinks some of their most favourite notions either of little importance, or not founded in Reason and Scripture, and consequently, cannot insist on them as capital and fundamental articles.

While therefore the headstrong and inflamed Passions, and the Reason of mankind are at irreconcilable variance with each other, how is it possible for true learning and virtue to escape censure, procure general respect, or its worth be acknowledged and rewarded ! While the prevailing taste of the age is for pleasure, and any doctrines are eagerly

embraced, that will but palliate men's vices, and excuse them from the severities of an holy life, while this is the prevailing taste of mankind, learning and religious knowledge are sure to suffer, to starve in obscurity, be neglected and vilified on this side the grave, and the memory of them afterwards perish for ever.

But let not the injudicious Enthusiast thus spurn the ashes of the wise and good man, and upbraid him with his principles. His principles are not less true for being contemptuously treated and ridiculed. When his body is converted into its primitive dust, his principles will flourish in immortal vigour. If they are founded in truth, all the malice and bigotry in the world cannot shake and subvert them. Though the wise and religious *person perish, and no man layeth it to heart*; though his sentiments and services in the cause of religion are treated with contempt and scorn, yet there lives a supreme and all-righteous JUDGE who is the patron and friend of truth, and who will reward all honest endeavours to investigate it, whatever the success may be. And he, who seriously considers those transcendant rewards that
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he will bestow on those, who are sincerely desirous to discover his mind and will, and to conform to it when discovered, can see nothing distressful and formidable in the ingratitude of mankind, and in the hard and uncharitable censures of a malevolent world.

II. I proceed to consider the disingenuous baseness of that conduct towards good persons, which is mentioned in the Text. And can there be a more shocking instance of detestable ingratitude, than a wilful neglect and contempt of those excellent and useful persons, whom the great author of all wisdom has endowed with large capacities and powers, and who freely and generously expended those powers in promoting our highest and best interests! Who have voluntarily sacrificed many of the joys and pleasures of this life for the publick welfare, who have sat late, rose early, and eat the bread of sorrow and labour; who have with indefatigable pains and industry worn out a precarious being in long and painful researches; who foregoing the amusements and profits of this world, have engaged in useful studies, for the regular completion

pletion of which, the whole term of human life was scarce sufficient; who, though imployed in these great and laborious works, have nevertheless at the same time *approved themselves as ministers of Christ, in much patience, in afflictions, in distresses, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, and the armour of righteousness*; and who, by unweariedly imploying these great and excellent abilities, *as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God*, have undermined their vigour of constitution, ruined their health, and been obliged to support, merely by art, the tottering and frail house of their earthly tabernacle, wasted and impaired by their incessant application, and hastening fast to its final dissolution. And is it not cruelty, to the last, the basest and most detestable cruelty, to aggravate their last sufferings by scurrility and abuse; and to add to these infirmities of declining life, which they have greatly accelerated by long and painful watchings and studies, by detracting from their just merit, speaking contemptibly of their past services, calumniating their endowments, and striving to lessen their authority and influence in the world?

This

This is treatment so black and execrable, that one would think it morally impossible that any persons could be guilty of it, however abandoned and lost to all sense of shame and virtue. But what shall we say, when we find that even persons of wisdom and good sense are capable of such an unworthy conduct towards the most eminent and amiable characters. But forbid it heaven! Forbid it decency! That such treatment as this of the most respectable characters should ever for the future be countenanced and supported by the friends of religion and patrons of virtue! One would think that their exalted worth and merit, would stop the mouth of slander and defamation, and soften and disarm rage and rancour. But alas, in this unhappy world, the reputation of the best of men is not safe, the greatest innocence will not privilege us, the arrow of malice and detraction that flieth in secret, can wound our peace, and despoil us of all satisfaction for ever. Unhappy, beyond description unhappy, that the exalted talents of persons of whom this world is not worthy, cannot secure them a small pittance of our esteem and love, during their short and precarious

carious continuance among us! Shameful ingratitude, that persons, whose whole lives have been spent in the rigorous search of truth, and study of the Scriptures, must for a few real or supposed inadvertencies, and for imperfections inseparable from human nature, be treated in life with distance and coldness, and fall in death without that respect, due to their distinguished attainments! *How died Chrysippus? As a dog dieth*—is applicable to many a wise and good man, whom the world has neglected.

But certainly it prognosticates no good either to present or future times; certainly it is no proof either of the wisdom or virtue of the present age, that we put no publick distinction between the most opposite characters, but treat both indiscriminately. This undistinguishing behaviour some of the wise sages of antiquity have pronounced to be the pest and bane of societies and cities, * and the greatest injustice that is ever acted in

* Εν τῷδε γὰρ καμνουσιν αἱ πολλαὶ πόλεις,
Ὅταν τις εὐθλὸς καὶ προθυμὸς ὢν ἀνὴρ,
Μηδὲν φερῆται τῶν κακίωνων πλεον.

Eurip. Hec. v. 306.

in the world. † But shameful as this conduct is, it is what we are acting over again, and the light of the gospel it seems, has neither made us wiser nor better in this essential article of our duty; we suffer the righteous man both to live and perish without laying it to heart. His fair example, with all its powerful attractions, cannot subdue our prejudices, and soften us into esteem and love; and the memory of his wisdom and excellencies, when dead, can hardly force from us a faint and cold eulogy. O what vile and infamous ingratitude is it possible for men, even for men of distinguished abilities and good sense, to be guilty of, when they suffer some of their worst passions to take the lead of understanding and judgment!

These reflections immediately dictated themselves to my heart, on being informed of the sudden and unexpected death of my most worthy and excellent friend Dr. TAYLOR. A man, to whose writings and personal instructions I owe more than to all the

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books

† Και τοι εγωγε ουδεν ανισωτερον νομιζω των εν ανθρωποις
ειναι, του των ισων του τε κακου και του αγαθου αξιουσθαι.
Xenophon Cyri Instit. p. 99. Ed. Hutch.

books and men I ever conversed with. I shall ever look upon it as the most happy providence, with which I was ever favoured, that in early life I read his most excellent books full of the best instruction, and most excellently calculated to enlarge the mind, and to inspire it with just, rational, and generous sentiments. And I shall ever esteem it as a most distinguishing blessing, that I was afterward honoured with his friendship, and an epistolary correspondence for some years before his death, in which with the greatest benevolence and goodness of heart he condescended to solve the difficulties I proposed, and answer my objections. And those who know his great skill in the *Hebrew*, on which important branch of literature our correspondence chiefly turned, will not think my assertions too strong, when I declare, that I can now produce a small collection of some of the most valuable criticisms on that language, with regard to ingenious conjectures, various lections, and explanations of difficult passages, that any age or nation ever saw. As this great man had above *forty* years been employed in reading and accurately studying this language,

guage, it is not to be wondred at that his knowledge herein was the most perfect and critical that could be attained; and this his knowledge was the more valuable, as it was not a superstructure on the labours of others, but was solely educed from the treasures of a great and judicious mind by the dint of indefatigable industry and application.

Dr. JOHN TAYLOR was born near *Lancaster*; settled first at *Kirkstead* in *Lincolnshire*, where he preached to a very small Congregation, and taught a Grammar-School for the support of his family, near *twenty* years; but afterwards, his great worth and merit in this obscure situation being known, he was unanimously chosen to *Norwich*, where he preached many years with great acceptance and usefulness. From this City the friends of liberty invited him to *WARRINGTON* in *Lancashire*, to superintend an *Academy* they had formed on a most rational and generous plan, judging him the fittest person, as his learning and worth were so universally known and acknowledged, to give this new institution a proper dignity and reputation in the world. With this invitation, so warmly and importunately en-

forced, he complied, from motives purely disinterested, as he has often assured me; and induced by the fair and flattering prospect of being greatly useful in instructing young persons for the ministry. How he was here used, after all his great and good services to the cause of Christianity and the Church of God, and what scurrility and abuse he suffered, after quitting a generous and worthy People, among whom he had for many years been caressed and happy; how a few silly differences about the formal punctilio of precedency and authority, and the vague and uncertain principles of morals, were kindled into such a flame, as soon involved and almost endangered the very being of the *Academy* itself, needs not here be related, the world is too well acquainted with the odious particulars.

Here, however, the friends of Christianity and virtue cannot but drop a tear, a tear of tenderness and pity, to see a man of true greatness, goodness, and wisdom, by the hands of rude violence and cruelty degraded and sunk, abused and despised, friendless and forlorn, his abilities questioned, his merit disputed, and one of the most amiable characters

characters, that ever virtue assumed and appeared in, aspersed and vilified, and unable with all its friendly influence and native charms and power to soften envy and malice into veneration and love. The bad usage he met with, where he naturally expected the kindest, he would often tell me, "would certainly shorten his days." And so it proved. He, who had the best constitution, and who had by a course of steady temperance preserved it the best of any severe student I ever knew, was soon thrown into a variety and complication of disorders, which though by gentle, yet repeated strokes, soon laid the originally strong and vigorous fabric in sad and deplorable ruins. The last time I saw him, he bitterly lamented his unhappy situation, and his being rendered, (all proper authority, as a Tutor, being taken from him) utterly incapable of being any longer useful; said, his life was not an object of desire to him, when his publick usefulness was no more; and repeated with great emotion some celebrated lines to this purpose out of *Sophocles*.*

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* Αἰχρὸν γὰρ ἀνδρὰ τοῦ μακροῦ χρῆζειν βίου,
κακοῖσιν ὅσις μὴδὲν ἐξάλλασσεται.

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It is necessary to be remarked, that he always spoke to me with the greatest respect of his *Fellow-Tutors*, amongst whom there always subsisted the greatest harmony, and on whose good learning and amiable characters he ever passed an high and deserved encomium.

To the temper, disposition, abilities, learning, and great merit of Dr. TAYLOR, I cannot be supposed to be a stranger, having been happy in a strict intimacy with him for several years. With regard to these I only pretend faithfully to speak from my own observation of what I saw in him, and therefore shall impartially transcribe the strong idea of his goodness and virtue, which is warmly impressed on my heart.

I never saw a man's countenance, that was a truer index of his mind, than Dr. TAYLOR's. There was something placid and ingaging in his air and features, that most powerfully commanded respect and love. An argument when dictated by his strong sense, and urged by that power of language
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Τι γὰρ παρ' ἡμᾶρ ἡμέρα τερπεν ἔχει,
Προδῆσα κἀναθῆσα τοῦ γε κατθανεῖν ;

Sophoc. Ajax. 476.

he possessed, was irresistible, when it was enforced by a sweet and insinuating look, to which you could deny nothing. Nothing could be further from that haughty and supercilious air, and mein, and gait, which other great men insensibly contract, and by which they are publicly known and distinguished from the rest of the species. He was never known to brow-beat modest virtue, but to encourage it by every honest art. It delighted his soul to find in any a docil and ingenuous disposition, desirous of knowledge, particularly scriptural-knowledge, and he cultivated such a disposition with more than parental care and fondness.

When I say, he was no bigot, I am sensible I shall be accused of great partiality by some, and of great heresy by others. But if I knew any thing of good Dr. TAYLOR, this I can with truth affirm concerning him, that he loved good persons of all parties and denominations, however widely they might differ from him; would frequently repeat it again and again, “ that Christians of all
 “ Parties are agreed in the great fundamentals
 “ of religion, and only differ about some few
 “ trifling distinctions; that to embrace the
 “ same

“ same set of notions as he, or any other
 “ fallible man did, was not at all material
 “ with regard to men’s final happiness and
 “ salvation.” If ever he expressed an uncommon warmth and honest indignation against any thing, it was against *Athanasianism*, which he thought one of the greatest corruptions of pure and genuine Christianity, as this doctrine entirely subverts the unity of God, the great and primary foundation of all religion, natural and revealed.

I never saw a greater and more exemplary pattern of resignation to the Will of God. From a firm and unshaken persuasion, that every station and situation in this life is of God’s appointment, who assigns us what circumstances seem best to his infinite and unerring wisdom, he bore his sufferings with a noble and glorious fortitude, referring himself to God with a cheerfulness and submission that penetrated every soul that heard him. With what holy joy and transporting triumph did he speak of the second coming of our blessed Lord; and with what religious rapture would he anticipate that blessed and happy day! Death had no terrors for him. He was not afraid of dying. He
 had

had every thing to hope from death. Death would introduce him into a glorious and blessed immortality, *where God would wipe away all tears from his eyes.* And it pleased the Almighty to favour this great and good man with that *Euthanasia*, that sudden, easy, and almost imperceptible dismissal from the body*, which the wisest and best of men have pronounced the most happy, and wished for as the most desirable circumstance in death †. And a manner it is surely much to be envied by every good man, of making one's last exit and departure from this vale of sorrow and suffering.

Thus has death deprived us of one of the greatest ornaments of religion and learning; has extinguished a burning and shining light, that diffused around it the most useful and salutary beams; has deprived me of the best and worthiest friend I ever enjoyed;

* He went to bed as well as usual, only complaining a little of a pressure he felt on his stomach, and was found dead in the morning, Thursday March 5th.

† Sortitus exitum facilem et qualem semper optaverat. Nam quoties audisset, cito ac nullo cruciatu defunctum quempiam, sibi et suis *euthanasiam* similem (hoc enim et verbo uti solebat) precabatur. Sueton.

his family of a tender and compassionate Father ; the Academy of its most illustrious support and glory ; the Dissenters of a great and truly learned Patron ; and the world of one of the most amiable characters that ever ennobled and dignified human nature.

His WRITINGS will remain an immortal monument of his various learning, excellent abilities, just and clear discernment, and critical knowledge of the Scriptures. His mind was the most excellently furnished with valuable and useful branches of literature, of any man's I ever knew. His reading in *modern* books, indeed, was far from being extensive. It cannot be supposed, that a person, whose whole life was indefatigably imployed, besides the constant duties of the ministry, in teaching a Grammar-School, and in forming an Hebrew Concordance, should be able to redeem many vacant hours for acquiring a large acquaintance with what was daily passing in the literary world. Instead of wondering that he knew no more of books, we ought rather to wonder, that he had read so much as he really had, considering the few avocations he permitted himself to enjoy. But
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a defect here was amply compensated by an habit of close thinking, and an accurate attention to the powers of his own mind. That a person who above *forty* years had been every day imployed in a School, or in arranging Hebrew words, should at the same time descend into the most profound and abstract philosophical enquiries, and be able to think and write on the foundation of morals in so clear and intelligible a manner as he has done, is astonishing: but it is a proof, what uncommon attainments the human mind is capable of acquiring by a constant and vigorous exertion of its enlarged faculties, and the dint of sedulous and severe application.

In classical learning lay his great excellence. Here he shone without a rival. He had in early life committed to memory, and faithfully retained, almost all the most beautiful passages and striking descriptions in the Greek and Roman Poets, and could repeat them with an exactness and propriety that was amazing. The great neglect of this useful literature amongst Dissenting Ministers, and their general deficiency herein, he would often say, exposed us more than any thing else, to the jests and contempt of the *Clergy*,

who principally study and value themselves upon their accurate and superior knowledge of it. Next to this, he warmly inculcated a critical acquaintance with the Scriptures, as the most useful and important of all other studies. What his real sentiments were, and what the method he recommended was, with regard to a proficiency in this, may be seen by consulting an excellent note in his *Key to the Romans*, p. 122. *second* edition.

The first piece he published, was a prefatory discourse to a Narrative of Mr. *Joseph Rawson's* Case, who was excluded from communion with the Congregational Church in *Nottingham*, for asserting the unity and supremacy of God the Father. In this the reader will find a most judicious defence of the common rights of Christians, and of the sufficiency and perfection of Scripture, without the aid of human Schemes, Creeds and Confessions. A *second* edition of this has been published.

In 1740, — his *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, which has gone through *three* editions. This is a book generally and deservedly esteemed *unanswerable*,

ble, and which has, I believe, met with more universal acceptance, and done more real service to the christian world, than any one book of polemical divinity that the present age has seen. This drew him into a controversy with Dr. JENNINGS and Dr. WATTS, both men of great abilities and good learning, and who said indeed every thing that could be said, in defence of a doctrine that had no foundation in Reason or Revelation.

In 1745, —— his *Paraphrase on the Romans*; a *third* edition of which has been lately printed. In the same year he also published a small *Scripture Catechism with Proofs*, which I can heartily recommend to Parents, as a most plain, excellent, and judicious summary of the christian religion. It has passed *four* editions.

In 1750, —— a *Collection of Tunes in various Airs*, with a scheme for supporting the spirit and practice of Psalmody in Congregations.

In 1751, —— without his name, a small Pamphlet, entitled the *Importance of Children, or Motives to the good Education of Children*,

In

In 1753, ——— his *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, in which it must be confessed he failed most egregiously. His reasoning was neither clear nor satisfactory, owing perhaps to the doctrine being in itself *almost* unintelligible, and *hardly* capable of being rationally explained.

In 1754, ——— his great work, the labour of his whole life, an *Hebrew English Concordance* in two large volumes in Folio, the most accurate work that any age or nation ever saw; which will remain a monument to all future ages of his indefatigable industry and critical skill. The names of the *Bishops* who cheerfully encouraged this immortal work which appear in the list of his Subscribers, will be transmitted with everlasting honour, for their moderation and patronage of true learning and worth, to the latest posterity.

He wrote in the same year an excellent Pamphlet, entitled *the Lord's-Supper explained upon Scripture Principles*, in which this sacred Ordinance is placed in a clear light, and its importance well stated.

In 1757, he published his *Covenant of Grace*, in defence of Infant-Baptism.

In

In 1755, —— a *Charge* delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. *Smithson*.

In 1756, —— a *Sermon*, preached at the opening of the new Chapel in *Norwich*.

In 1759, he wrote his *Examination of Dr. Hutcheson's Scheme of Morality*; a judicious performance, which met with great and deserved acceptance in the world. He who carefully reads and compares with this, the arguments advanced in a most excellent book, which was published a year before the Doctor's Pamphlet, by my ingenious friend Mr. *Richard Price*, and entitled a *Review of the principal Difficulties in Morals*, will enjoy a most exquisite pleasure and rational satisfaction.

His last performance was a *Sketch of moral Philosophy*, which he drew up for the use of his own Pupils, and as introductory to lectures on *Wollaston's Religion of Nature*. This was published 1760.*

From his first settling at *Warrington*, as Tutor, he spent all his leisure-hours in reviewing

* The Dr. with great care and correctness composed, and fairly transcribed, a number of discourses on Moral, Critical, and Practical Subjects, sufficient to make *Four Volumes* in Octavo; which he designed for the Press, and intended to be published after his death.

viewing his Concordance, collating passages in an alphabetical order, and correcting the english translation. He had made a considerable advance in this useful work, when death seized him.

In such great and good works was this most excellent person constantly imployed, *approving himself faithful*, in his great Master's service, *in much patience, in afflictions and distresses, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*; and at last closing a life of honour and usefulness, with joyful and triumphant expectations with regard to futurity. Happy, had the *last* stage of a race begun with such ardour, and prosecuted with such glory, been crowned with its deserved honours! Thrice happy, if after having husbanded and made the most of every hour, and sustained all *the labour and heat of the day*, his evening had been more unclouded, serene, and happy †! But supreme wisdom

† In a very affecting Letter, wrote not long before his death, he thus expresses himself, as to his situation at WAR-RINGTON. "Before I came hither, and in order to induce
" me to ingage in the Academy, the principal Gentlemen
" at *Manchester* in their several Letters to me, said every thing
" encourageing; promising, or intimating, that my Life
" should

wisdom knows what is best for us ; and it is the great consolation of human life, to be assured that no evils and distresses can be-

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“ should be as easy, comfortable, and happy as ever : Nor
“ was Mr. S — n wanting in any Professions that might
“ draw me into the Scheme ; assuring me, that my joining
“ in the design was the very foundation of the whole Fa-
“ brick.

“ I believed them ; I came in hope of being more ex-
“ tensively useful, not doubting, but I should enjoy the re-
“ mainder of life in tranquility and peace. But, alas, Sir,
“ I am sorry to tell you, I have found quite the reverse.”

After mentioning some particulars of the cruel treatment he met with, though chosen Professor both of Morality and Divinity, he adds,

“ My Condition ever since I came to WARRINGTON has
“ been very uneasy, and I may say, wretched. Under
“ which, had I not been habituated to hope and trust in
“ God, I must have sunk. It is not possible I should conti-
“ nue here, either on my own account, or that of the Aca-
“ demy ; for what good can be done in a place of Variance
“ and Contradiction !

“ Under that reasonable and friendly usage I had a right
“ to expect, I should perform my work with alacrity and
“ pleasure, and, by the blessing of God, with good success ;
“ but under such contumelious treatment my Spirits are
“ sunk, my good Designs and Endeavours are discouraged,
“ and my Health affected and impaired.

“ Consider, Sir, my Years — consider my long and close
“ Studies — consider the Character and Reputation I have
“ established, especially in the learned World — consider the
“ generous and disinterested Manner in which I came into
“ these Parts — consider the ardent Desire I have to be use-
“ ful in my present Station.” * * *

fall us, without the all-wise permission and appointment of God.

The close of this great man's life may teach *Ministers* a lesson of useful instruction, that superior abilities, learning and virtue, cannot insure the respect and esteem of the world. We here see the greatest and noblest instance of them aspersed and vilified, loaded with contempt and reproach, and sunk in the most abject misery and wretchedness. This should instruct us, whatever happiness and comfort we may *now* enjoy among our respective Congregations, to fortify our breasts with the best christian principles, to have the censures and disrespect of an ill-judging world always before our eyes, and to pronounce neither ourselves nor any other persons, whatever their situations may be, *happy*, 'till we have waited for the *great teacher Death* to ratify and confirm our verdict.*

Now let those who have so often, and so uncharitably, called him an *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Pelagian*, *Deist*, and *worse than a Deist*, † spend all their vain rage and rancour upon him.

* See the Motto.

† Preface to Mr. *John Wesley's* book on Original Sin. p. 5.

him. Let those whose christian principles could teach them to abuse him, and deny him salvation, for a few trifling differences, heap upon his memory all the execrations that Enthusiasm can very religiously and piously utter. Let them spurn his ashes and insult over his grave with the same ridiculous wildness, the same frantick postures, and the same low revenge, as it is well known, some of them did over Dr. *Foster's*, after his interment. Such treatment *now* can no more affect his happiness, than it ever affected his arguments. He now enjoys a calm undisturbed repose under the protection and guardianship of him, *who has the keys of death, and the invisible world*; and in the morning of the resurrection, *when those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*, will rise from the ruins of the grave, the first in immortal glory, splendor and blessedness.

May God grant of his infinite mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may meet death with the same composure and fortitude, and have a dismissal from this vain world full of the same triumphant hopes, and joyful prospects !

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To conclude ; upon carefully reviewing his useful and exemplary life, and reflecting on the virtues of his most amiable conduct, I cannot sum up his character to more advantage, than in applying to him what *Xenophon* relates concerning the excellent *Socrates*, in the conclusion of the *fourth* book of his *Memoirs* ; of which the following is a free translation.

“ Those, who were personally acquainted with *Socrates* and knew his great worth, will ever hold his memory in the most grateful remembrance, and look upon him as a person who possessed the most excellent endowments for teaching moral virtue with advantage. Being such an one as I have described him, a person of such exemplary piety, as to undertake nothing without first consulting the Will of heaven ; of such inviolable justice, as to injure no one in the most trifling concern, but, on the contrary, assist all those with whom he was connected, in their highest and most important interests ; of such temperance, as never to sacrifice his Reason to his appetites, and indulge sensual gratifications at
“ the

“ the expence of his better judgment and
 “ virtue ; of such sagacity, as to be infal-
 “ lible in his determinations concerning
 “ moral good and evil, and to want no
 “ one’s decisions, but to be self-sufficient
 “ for his own instruction and information
 “ in these important articles ; of such abi-
 “ lities, as to fix and define the limits of
 “ duty with accuracy and precision, and
 “ by the powers of perswasion to prompt
 “ and ingage his hearers to the at-
 “ tainment of universal virtue ; a person
 “ thus formed by nature and self-instruc-
 “ tion, seems to have attained the highest
 “ summit of human worth and excellence.
 “ BUT IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON
 “ SHOULD NOT BE PLEASED WITH THE
 “ DRAUGHT OF HIS CONSPICUOUS VIR-
 “ TUES, LET SUCH AN ONE SIT DOWN,
 “ AND COMPARE WITH IT THE CHARAC-
 “ TER OF ANY OTHER, AND THEN IM-
 “ PARTIALLY DECIDE.”





